

### OPPOSITION TO PRIVATIZING AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to express my concern in opposition to privatizing air traffic controllers in airports across our country.

I do not know about my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, but the safety of the flying public should not be done by the lowest bidder. Congress has already determined that privatization does not guarantee better service, safety, or efficiency.

Frankly, we were all shocked to learn of the President's executive order, released last Friday, deleting the words "an inherently governmental function" from an executive order of December 2000 regarding air traffic controllers, which set the wheels of privatization into motion.

It is amazing to me that this Congress has invested billions of dollars on a new agency to federalize baggage screeners while at the same time entertaining the idea of contracting out our important air traffic control positions for the cheapest offer. This is an illogical step and inconsistent with our previous attempts to ensure a safe means of transportation.

We should heed warnings from other countries that are currently struggling under privatization. The privatized systems of Canada and Great Britain have not worked. Canada has delayed buying new equipment, postponed hiring new controllers, and even increased fees to cover costs.

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Great Britain resorted to the banks for a bailout. Is this the system we want to follow? In talking about privatization and Social Security, I think we have a comparison. Look what happened to the stock market. What would happen if we privatized Social Security today.

We talk about competition. I wish the President and the administration would look at competition towards pharmaceutical companies and bidding on the Medicare prescription drug program, having pharmaceutical companies bid to get the business of Medicare for pharmaceutical drugs for our seniors. It makes it competitive, but they will not talk about that. During the confusion of September 11, our hard-working air traffic controllers landed 5,000 planes in less than 2 hours without one operational error. Should we privatize a system that performed so efficiently and accurately during the most critical day of all days?

I hope this Congress is not fooled by the promise, or gimmick, of privatization.

### AGRICULTURAL CROSSROADS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLER). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last month's enactment of the agriculture authorization bill signaled that we are at a crossroads here in America, not just as it relates to agriculture, but very interesting developments for the environment, community development, and even the huge increase in agricultural funding could not conceal the cracks that are emerging as these issues are coming forward.

Hidden behind all of the fireworks that surrounded the agricultural bill, we have ended up with it being further removed from the needs of most farmers. It is not only removed from the public we are supposed to serve, not only removed from the agricultural interests, but it is even removed from the will of the Members of this body.

I recall on this floor working hard on a motion to instruct the conferees of the House to vote in favor of provisions of the Senate that would have placed a \$275,000 payment limit. Despite the fact that it was passed by 265 of our colleagues, it was ignored by the conferees in favor of a \$360,000 payment limit that itself was riddled with exemptions which will make it largely meaningless.

Mr. Speaker, I am afraid we are having two very different visions of the agricultural future of this country emerge as a part of those deliberations. One is for the status quo which is a mutation of over 70 years of depression-era subsidization which no longer meets the needs of average farmers, consumers, and certainly not the environment.

This vision is opposed to one that is economically sound, a sustainable future, that is in fact healthy for the farmers, the environment, consumers and the taxpayer. What matters? Why would a city representative like me become so interested in farm policy? Well, we cannot deal with the governments of this country without focusing on the role that agriculture plays. It is firmly grounded in American lore, our history and our tradition. Think back to Thomas Jefferson's agrarian ideals. Ignore for a moment that this was sort of an effete intellectual who never turned a profit on his many acres of land and several hundred slaves, never mind that he was hopelessly in debt, and eventually lost his estate at his death to his creditors. Nevertheless, that vision, that agrarian ideal of Thomas Jefferson persists; and agriculture still is essential today to America, even though only 2 percent of our population is actively involved with farming, versus 25 percent or more in the 1930s. There are still 2 million family farms and ranches that cover nearly 50 percent of the land area in the lower 48 States.

Americans spend 10 percent of their income on food, and that is one of the

lowest ratios in the world. However, this 10 percent that we spend is disguised by a variety of subsidies and tax payments. Indeed, 40 percent of net farm income comes from the Federal Government. So there are a great number of tax dollars that are claimed. There are huge environmental costs that are associated with our current system of production which I will talk about in a few minutes, and consumers are paying exorbitant prices for commodities like sugar, more than twice the world market, pay dearly for avocados, peanuts, and the list goes on.

The environmental impacts of agribusiness is something that I think is important for us to focus on. It is, for instance, in many areas extraordinarily water-intensive. It is not just a problem occasionally when we have some parts of the country as they are today facing drought and water quality problems. Although even the administration seems to acknowledge that we are going to be facing serious problems associated with global climate change, they are not prepared to offer up any solutions for that, but that is going to have potentially very profound effects on how water is supplied in the future.

Mr. Speaker, it takes a tremendous amount of water for us to be involved in some grotesquely inappropriate activities. We are providing heavily subsidized water for subsidized crops, like growing cotton and rice in the desert. In the Pacific Northwest, we have been having problems in the Klamath River basin where we have water-intensive agriculture in an arid plane.

It takes an enormous amount of water to produce meat for human consumption. 1,000 tons of water for one ton of grain; and increasingly, our cattle are grain fed and it requires almost 5 pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef for human consumption. If we do the math, you see the huge amount of water that is involved in the production of cattle.

Agriculture also poses many of the most important challenges to water quality. It contributes to poor water quality in 60 percent of the Nation's impaired river miles, which is more than the dams, sewage discharges, and urban storm drainage combined. Think of it. Agriculture produces 60 percent of the water quality problems in the Nation's impaired river miles, more than dams, sewage discharges, and urban storm drainage combined.

We have a situation where the petrochemical fertilizers are also extensively required. It takes on average approximately 1.2 gallons for every bushel of corn. And then there is the oil production for energy. A typical cow will consume the equivalent of 284 gallons of oil in their lifetime, the energy necessary to sustain that animal. We have essentially transformed cattle from solar-powered animals to fossil fuel machines.

It is also a diet that is unhealthy and unnatural for these animals. It has turned once bucolic agricultural enterprises into an extension of the modern